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Letter dated 30 November 2017 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the fiftieth monthly report of the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) (see annex). The present letter covers the period from 23 October to 22 November 2017.

Of the 27 chemical weapons production facilities declared by the Syrian Arab Republic, 25 have been verified by the Technical Secretariat of OPCW as having been destroyed. Following an improvement in the prevailing security situation, the OPCW Technical Secretariat was able to conduct an initial inspection of the last two stationary above-ground facilities from 6 to 12 November 2017. I welcome this progress and look forward to the prompt destruction of these two remaining facilities.

With regard to the declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic, I note with regret the statement of the Director-General that the latest submissions by the Syrian Arab Republic, regarding its Scientific Studies and Research Centre, have not enabled the resolution of the outstanding issues, and that the declaration of the Centre remains incomplete. I also note that the second round of inspections at two facilities at the Centre took place from 14 to 21 November 2017.

I remain deeply concerned that the outstanding issues related to the declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic have not yet been resolved. Until then, I urge the Syrian Arab Republic to extend its full cooperation to OPCW.

With regard to the work of the OPCW fact-finding mission in the Syrian Arab Republic, a report by the fact-finding mission regarding the alleged incident in Lataminah was transmitted to you on 3 November 2017. It was concluded in the report that sarin "was more than likely used as a chemical weapon" on 30 March 2017 in that incident. That conclusion, indicating that in spite of universal condemnation, chemical weapons continue to be used in the Syrian Arab Republic, is deeply dismaying. There is no justification for using these weapons, and there can be no impunity for those who do. Accountability is crucial for restoring the taboo against chemical weapons and strengthening the disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

I also take note of a summary update of the activities carried out by the fact-finding mission that was transmitted to you on 20 November 2017, in which it is indicated that the work of the fact-finding mission in investigating additional allegations of the use of chemical weapons is ongoing.

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Please recycle

The Leadership Panel of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism submitted its seventh report to the Security Council on 26 October 2017.

Having not been extended by the Security Council, the mandate of the Mechanism ended on 17 November 2017. The Mechanism has now commenced work to archive its documentation and to liquidate its assets, in accordance with United Nations established procedures.

I call upon the Security Council to continue to give all due attention to the ongoing reports of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

(*Signed*) António **Guterres**

Annex

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

I have the honour to transmit to you my report entitled "Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme", prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Executive Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1 and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), both dated 27 September 2013, for transmission to the Security Council (see enclosure). My report covers the period from 23 October to 22 November 2017 and also covers the reporting requirements of Executive Council decision EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013.

(*Signed*) Ahmet **Üzümcü**

Enclosure

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

Note by the Director General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme

Background

1. In accordance with subparagraph 2(f) of the decision by the Executive Council (hereinafter "the Council") at its Thirty-Third Meeting (EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013), the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat") is to report to the Council on a monthly basis regarding the implementation of that decision. In accordance with paragraph 12 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), the report by the Secretariat is also to be submitted to the Security Council through the Secretary-General.

2. The Council, at its Thirty-Fourth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Detailed Requirements for the Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons and Syrian Chemical Weapons Production Facilities" (EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013). In paragraph 22 of that decision, the Council decided that the Secretariat should report on its implementation "in conjunction with its reporting required by subparagraph 2(f) of Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1".

3. The Council, at its Forty-Eighth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria" (EC-M-48/DEC.1, dated 4 February 2015) noting the Director-General's intent to include reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) in Syria, along with information on the Council's discussion thereof, as part of the monthly reporting pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). Similarly, the Council, at its Eighty-First Session, adopted a decision entitled "Report by the Director-General Regarding the Declaration and Related Submissions by the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-81/DEC.4, dated 23 March 2016), noting the Director-General's intent to provide information on the implementation of that decision.

4. The Council, at its Eighty-Third Session, adopted a decision entitled "OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism Reports on Chemical Weapons Use in the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-83/DEC.5, dated 11 November 2016). In subparagraph 12(a) of that decision, the Council decided that the Director-General shall "regularly inform the Council on the implementation of this decision and incorporate information regarding the implementation of this decision into his monthly reporting to the United Nations Security Council, through the United Nations Secretary-General, regarding EC-M-33/DEC.1".

5. This, the fiftieth monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council decisions and includes information relevant to the period from 23 October 2017 to 22 November 2017.

Progress achieved by the Syrian Arab Republic in meeting the requirements of Executive Council decisions EC-M-33/DEC.1 and EC-M-34/DEC.1

6. Progress by the Syrian Arab Republic is as follows:

(a) The Secretariat has verified the destruction of 25 of the 27 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. From

6 to 12 November 2017, the Secretariat conducted an initial inspection of the last two stationary above-ground facilities in accordance with paragraph 44 of Part V of the Verification Annex to the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter "the Convention"). During the initial inspection, an evaluation of the most cost-effective destruction method for the declared buildings located at these sites was performed by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the Secretariat and the Syrian Arab Republic. As previously reported, an information Note on the request for financial assistance by the Syrian Arab Republic to undertake the destruction of the facilities located at these two sites has been circulated (S/1541/2017, dated 9 October 2017).

(b) On 20 November 2017, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its forty-eighth monthly report (EC-87/P/NAT.2, dated 20 November 2017) regarding activities on its territory related to the destruction of its CWPFs, as required by paragraph 19 of EC-M-34/DEC.1.

Progress in the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons by States Parties hosting destruction activities

7. As stated in previous reports, all of the chemicals declared by the Syrian Arab Republic that were removed from its territory in 2014 have now been destroyed.

Activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to Executive Council decisions EC-81/DEC.4 and EC-83/DEC.5

8. As previously reported, following high-level consultations held at the OPCW Headquarters from 16 to 18 September 2017, the Syrian Arab Republic supplemented its initial declaration through Note Verbale 93, dated 30 September 2017, by declaring additional laboratories and associated rooms of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC) under subparagraph 1(d) of Article III and under Article VI of the Convention, and through Note Verbale 94, dated 2 October 2017, incorporating a brief overview of the general activities of the SSRC (including Institute 3000) since its establishment and a description of the laboratories recently declared under subparagraph 1(d) of Article III.

9. Nonetheless, as reported in the Director-General's Note EC-86/DG.30, dated 4 October 2017, these latest submissions by the Syrian Arab Republic have not enabled the resolution of the outstanding issues related to the SSRC, and the Secretariat maintains its earlier assessment that the declaration of the SSRC remains incomplete.

10. On 10 November 2017, the Syrian Arab Republic provided 19 documents totalling approximately 450 pages. These documents provided details of some research and development activities declarable under subparagraph 1(d) of Article III of the Convention that reportedly took place in the declared laboratories of the SSRC between 1995 and 2010. The Secretariat is currently translating and analysing the information received. States Parties will be informed on the outcomes of this analysis.

11. In accordance with paragraph 11 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, the second round of inspections at the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the SSRC took place from 14 to 21 November 2017.

Other activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to the Syrian Arab Republic

12. As previously reported, the Steering Committee, which is comprised of representatives of the OPCW, UNOPS, and the Syrian Arab Republic, met in Beirut,

Lebanon, from 16 to 18 October 2017, to discuss the extension of the support provided by UNOPS and the Syrian Government, pursuant to existing arrangements, to the OPCW mission in the Syrian Arab Republic in 2018. In light of the ongoing and planned OPCW activities in the Syrian Arab Republic in 2018, a note verbale was subsequently sent to the Syrian Arab Republic to propose an extension of nine months for the current arrangements while the Secretariat reviews its current mission and team composition within the Syrian Arab Republic.

13. As at the cut-off date of this report, one OPCW staff member was deployed as part of the OPCW mission in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Supplementary resources

14. As previously reported, a Trust Fund for Syria Missions was established in November 2015 to support the OPCW FFM and other remaining activities, such as those of the DAT. As at the cut-off date of this report, the total contribution stood at EUR 15.4 million, with forthcoming additional donations. Contribution agreements had been concluded with Canada, Chile, Finland, France, Germany, Monaco, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and the European Union.

Activities carried out with respect to the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria

15. Guided by Council decisions EC-M-48/DEC.1 and EC-M-50/DEC.1 (dated 23 November 2015), as well as by United Nations Security Council resolution 2209 (2015), the FFM continued to study all available information relating to the allegations of use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. A summary update of the activities carried out by the FFM in 2017 was issued by the Secretariat on 14 November 2017 (S/1556/2017, dated 14 November 2017).

16. As previously reported, States Parties were briefed on 3 October 2017 on the results of the analyses of samples relating to the alleged use of chemicals as weapons in Ltamenah, Hama Governorate, in the Syrian Arab Republic in March 2017. Further to the circulation of these results in Note S/1544/2017 (dated 12 October 2017), a Note by the Secretariat entitled "Report of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria Regarding an Alleged Incident in Ltamenah, the Syrian Arab Republic, 30 March 2017" (S/1548/2017, dated 2 November 2017) concluded that the FFM was "able to conclude that sarin was more than likely used as a chemical weapon on 30 March 2017 in the south of Ltamenah". This Note was submitted for the consideration of States Parties and forwarded to the United Nations Secretary-General.

17. The OPCW has also continued to extend its full cooperation and support to the JIM. The seventh report of the JIM, submitted to the United Nations Security Council pursuant to its resolutions 2235 (2015) and 2319 (2016), was transmitted to States Parties through a letter from the Director-General dated 2 November 2017. The Fifty-Sixth Meeting of the Council was convened on 9, 17, 23, and 24 November 2017 to discuss this report.

Conclusion

18. The main focus of the future activities of the OPCW mission in the Syrian Arab Republic will be on the activities of the FFM and on the implementation of Council decisions EC-83/DEC.5 and EC-81/DEC.4, including declaration-related issues, as well as on the verification of the destruction of the two stationary above-ground facilities, and annual inspections of the underground structures already verified as destroyed.